



Digital Cameras

Capturing the moment effectively used to be an expensive business, but these days there are cameras that deliver quality and control at a price you can afford. We look at eight of the best

IN THIS REVIEW

Acer CR-8530
Fujifilm FinePix F10
Kodak EasyShare Z740
Nikon Coolpix S1
Olympus μ-mini Digital S
Panasonic Lumix DMC-LZ2
Pentax Optio WP
Sony CyberShot DSC-P200

Large, high-quality photos used to be available only to a select few who could afford pricey single lens reflex (SLR) cameras and costly printers. But now you can buy a camera with the multi-megapixel sensor and high-quality optics necessary to take great photographs for under £250. Better still, if you invest in one of the photo printers in our *Labs* review on page 173, you can make top-quality photo prints and enlargements in the comfort of your home.

This month, we have tested eight of the best high-quality compact cameras, each costing less than £250 including VAT. Every one has a sensor that can capture at least 4.9 megapixels, so you can print pin-sharp pictures that are well over 6x4" in size, and a zoom lens for framing your subject properly.

Whether you want a point-and-shoot camera or one that offers you more control over your shots, we can help you pick the perfect camera for your photography.



CHOOSING A... DIGITAL CAMERA

Quality cameras may be more affordable, but you shouldn't waste money on flashy features you won't use. Get the right camera for your needs – this buying guide can help with those all-important snap decisions

Singling out the perfect digital camera for you should not be an arduous task. You just need to consider what kind of photographs you want to take. After all, you wouldn't buy a Ferrari to do the school run, would you? There's little point buying a complicated camera with dozens of manual controls if you just want to take snaps of your friends on holiday.

In this guide we'll consider which features are useful for different kinds of photography, and discuss the factors that govern how well a digital camera works. Before you buy, it's important to think about the resolution at which the camera will record, the quality and flexibility of its lens, how easy it is to operate and how well it is made.

When we tested these cameras, we set our standards for picture quality extremely high. All the cameras in this review produce pictures that, when printed on 6x4" photo paper, look sharp and rich in detail. The image quality issues we uncovered will become apparent only if you intend to print your pictures as enlargements or crop them severely.

PIXEL PERFECT

A camera detects and records light using a charge-coupled device (CCD). This is made of small sensors, each detecting one dot or 'pixel' in the finished picture. Cameras with more of these small sensors record more information about each shot, which means more detail. These cameras have CCDs that record between 4.9 and 8 million pixels per shot.

This doesn't mean a camera that records more pixels will necessarily take a better picture. Other factors, such as the sensitivity of the sensor and the quality of the camera lens, are also important.

A more sensitive sensor can capture images when there is less light present. Film – and by association CCD – sensitivity is described by its ISO rating. Most digital cameras have an effective ISO

range of 80-400, but some cameras on test exceed this range. FujiFilm's FinePix F10 has an effective rating of 80-1,600. This means you can take indoor or low-light shots reliably without resorting to long exposure times, which can result in camera shake, or a flash, which tends to flatten the subject.

LENS BE FRIENDS

The images captured by a camera's sensor are only as sharp as the picture projected on to it by the lens. Acer's CR-8530 has an 8-megapixel CCD, but its lens struggles to resolve enough detail to make the most of all these pixels. The result is a soft rather than a crisp photograph. Other cameras with fewer pixels produced sharper, more detailed images.

The zoom capability of a lens has a huge impact on the camera. Rather than thinking in terms of zooming in, it is more practical to consider a zoom lens as a framing tool. You want the subject of your photograph to occupy as much of the frame as possible. A high-zoom lens allows you to do this even when you can't get closer to the subject. This is perfect for sports and nature photography; just think of the sizes of the lens you see professionals use for these subjects.

At the full extent of a high-magnification zoom lens, camera shake becomes a pressing issue. You are often expected to have an incredibly steady hand, a tripod or a well-placed wall on which to place the camera. But some cameras, such as the Panasonic DMC-LZ2, have integrated image-stabilising mechanisms. A stabiliser helps you make better use of the full zoom range and is also useful in low light or when using a long exposure.

GET A GRIP

The cameras in this round-up provide different levels of manual control over the photos you take. Some are traditional point-and-shoot cameras with little direct control other than image size and exposure compensation.

Others allow direct manual control over the shutter speed and aperture, letting you manipulate motion blur and determine which elements of a scene are in focus – provided you don't miss the moment while fiddling with your settings. Some let you control the on-camera image processing and tweak the sharpness, saturation and contrast of the shot.

Small designer cameras are great for slipping in and out of your pocket, but they are not always the



▲ Kodak's lens may have a longer zoom capability, but it doesn't capture much more detail than its pocket-size rivals

most comfortable to use. This is particularly true if you have large hands or fingers. For those of you who wish to take your camera to the beach or shoot in the rain, two of the eight cameras in this review offer protection from the elements.

POWER UP

A digital camera is useful only if you can turn it on. Battery life is an important issue, especially if you'll be out taking pictures all day. Most cameras in this group have proprietary lithium-ion rechargeable batteries. These last for anything between 150 and 500 shots; check our table on page 170 to see how many pictures each one can take. Other cameras use standard AA cells. This allows you to buy some more power wherever you are.

▶ Lithium-ion batteries are compact, but you can't buy a replacement at your newsagent



▲ Some cameras use rubber seals to ensure that water and dirt can't enter the camera body



REVIEW DIGITAL CAMERA

ACER
CR-8530

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £227 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.dabs.comDETAILS www.acer.co.uk

Acer's CR-8530 may not look great, but it feels well made and reassuringly weighty. It has an 8-megapixel sensor and produces photos at resolutions up to 3,264x2,448. It also has an LCD screen that's ideal for framing and reviewing your shots, and a small but functional optical viewfinder.

However, the CR-8530 is one of the slower cameras to use. This is partly due to the large files it generates. Also, its auto-focus and flash-recharge times are sluggish. Still, the menu system is refreshingly simple, providing quick access to all the important settings. One touch brings up the exposure compensation options, and shutter and aperture controls are just as easy to use. Like many compact digital cameras, it has a 3x zoom lens. Despite its high-resolution CCD, its pictures are softer than those produced by the Panasonic and FujiFilm. Its sensor is better than its lens, and this combination gives textures and fine repeating detail a surreal, painted look. Colours are recorded faithfully and white balance and exposure are gauged correctly.

The CR-8530 produces faithfully coloured but soft images that can be printed on 10x8" paper at 300dpi. Unfortunately, its problems with fine detail show that the quality of a camera's lens is just as important as its resolution.

✓ Huge sensor and screen

✗ Pictures are often too soft

SPECIFICATIONS 3,264x2,448 resolution, 3x (36-108mm) optical zoom, SD memory (64MB supplied).
Part code AM.85303.001

REVIEW DIGITAL CAMERA

KODAK
EasyShare Z740

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £222 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.cameras2u.comCONTACT www.kodak.com

Kodak's EasyShare Z740 looks like a traditional SLR camera, and it is the only camera in this group to have a 10x zoom lens. This is the equivalent of a 38-380mm lens on a 35mm film camera. Its 5-megapixel sensor records photos at resolutions of up to 2,576x1,932 pixels.

Shots can be framed with the rear preview screen, but it feels more natural to use the LCD viewfinder. Neither has a particularly high resolution, though, so reviewing your photos is easier on a PC. The Z740 provides plenty of shooting controls including aperture priority, shutter priority and full manual modes. The interface is easy to navigate and never leaves you confused.

Kodak hasn't included any image-stabilisation technology, so at the furthest reach of the 10x zoom you need to use a tripod to eliminate camera shake. Although similarly specified, the Z740 struggles to capture as much fine detail as the other cameras in this round-up. Photos tend to be a bit soft, while leaves, grass and textured surfaces acquire a painted look.

The 10x zoom lens is impressive, but it's not very useful without an image stabiliser. Sadly, its image quality is also behind that of the competition.

✓ 10x optical zoom

✗ Soft images; lacks the required image stabilisation

SPECIFICATIONS 2,576x1,932 resolution, 10x (38-380mm) optical zoom, SD memory (32MB integrated).
Part code 1843440

REVIEW DIGITAL CAMERA

FUJIFILM
FinePix F10

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £234 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.7dayshop.comDETAILS www.fujifilm.co.uk

Fujifilm's metal-bodied FinePix F10 looks and feels expensive. Despite its angular design, its subtle curves make it comfortable to hold and the minimal number of buttons makes it easy to use. It has a sharp 3x zoom lens and a CCD sensor that records at 6.3-megapixels. At its most sensitive, the CCD performs like a film with an ISO of 1,600, and the F10 is much more flexible.

Although the flash performs well, there is often little reason to use it; the F10 can pick out low-light detail without resorting to long exposure times. The high sensitivity makes the F10 more effective at shooting sports, wildlife and indoor portraits without the flash. Photos displayed more purple fringing than we would expect, though. Most photos were slightly overexposed, but this can be remedied using the camera's exposure compensation. You can't control the aperture or shutter speed manually, but this is unlikely to present a problem.

For outdoor use, the F10 is the most responsive compact camera we have tested. Shutter lag is barely perceptible, and it's ready to take another shot almost immediately. It's not as responsive indoors, as its auto-focus can take a while. The F10 is easy to use, looks great, is incredibly responsive and takes great pictures. It clearly deserves our Best Buy award.

✓ Capable in very low light; lightning-fast response

✗ Slight overexposure in most photos; few manual controls

SPECIFICATIONS 2,848x2,136 resolution, 3x (36-108mm) optical zoom, xD memory (16MB supplied).
Part code N076590A

REVIEW DIGITAL CAMERA

NIKON
Coolpix S1

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £230 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.cameras2u.comDETAILS www.nikon.co.uk

A good portion of the rear of Nikon's Coolpix S1 is occupied by a 2½" LCD screen. This is bright, detailed and great for framing pictures in all but the brightest conditions. The large screen leaves little room for buttons, so they're very small, but also poorly labelled. The compact 3x zoom lens is on one corner of the front panel, but the body ensures fingers don't stray into view.

Images are recorded by the 5.1-megapixel CCD at a maximum resolution of 2,592x1,944, which is fine for A4 prints. Nikon's auto-focus and exposure system works well, but it's sluggish in low light. It evaluated most scenes correctly, but there is no spot or centre balance option. Exposure and white balance can be adjusted manually. Although small, the lens feeds a decent image to the CCD, producing crisp photos. The S1 uses a cradle to recharge its battery and connect to a PC or your TV. This is neat, but we would prefer to be given the option to use a single cable for transferring images.

Although it's not that easy or comfortable to use, the S1 produces some of the best photos we've seen from an ultra-compact camera. It's just a shame Nikon gave it such a challenging body.

✓ Great image quality; large screen

✗ Can recharge and transfer images only via cradle

SPECIFICATIONS 2,592x1,944 resolution, 3x (35-105mm) optical zoom, SD memory (12MB internal)



REVIEW DIGITAL CAMERA

OLYMPUS
μ-mini Digital S

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £210 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.dabs.comDETAILS www.olympus.co.uk

Compact and stylish, the metal-bodied Olympus μ-mini Digital S is also weatherproof. It fits perfectly into smaller hands for comfortable photo taking, but those with large hands will struggle not to obscure its 2x optical zoom lens. There is no viewfinder, so you have to use the small but detailed LCD screen.

Its 4.9-megapixel CCD produces a maximum output resolution of 2,560x1,920, allowing prints up to 8x6" without pixelation. It produces bright, vivid images. However, even at the highest detail setting and lowest compression, pictures appear quite soft. Large areas of a single colour such as grass or sky take on a painted appearance, absorbing any fine detail. This isn't a problem if most of your shots will be snaps of friends and family, but it may be an issue with landscapes and cityscapes.

The auto-focus and auto-exposure systems are accurate and swift, making the camera responsive to use. It's a point-and-shoot camera, so the lack of manual controls is hardly surprising. You can set the exposure compensation and white balance, but that's about it.

The μ-mini looks great and is easy to get to grips with. It takes bright, lively photos, but it struggles to resolve fine detail and has a limited zoom.

✓ Small, light and attractive

✗ Small screen; pictures lack fine detail

SPECIFICATIONS 2,560x1,920 resolution, 2x (30-70mm) optical zoom, xD memory (16MB supplied).
Part code 154346

REVIEW DIGITAL CAMERA

PENTAX
Optio WP

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £200 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.cameras2u.comDETAILS www.pentax.co.uk

Pentax's Optio WP is small and light and feels well constructed. It is waterproof to 1.5 metres for up to 30 minutes and the 3x optical zoom lens is permanently shielded from harm by a cheap-looking transparent cover. Its screen is a bit small, but the controls are well spaced and intelligently laid out.

The Optio WP usually produces bright, detailed photos at its maximum resolution of 2,560x1,920 pixels. On closer inspection, though, most pictures seemed slightly too sharp as a result of on-camera processing. This can be alleviated using the sharpness, saturation and contrast controls, but we would prefer the standard setting to produce better results.

White balance is calculated reasonably well, as is exposure, but there are manual controls should you need them. The Optio WP is the only camera in this group to have a fully manual focus control. In practice this is fiddly and imprecise, though; you're better sticking with the efficient auto-focus.

A few other cameras of this specification can be used underwater if you pay an extra £100 for a waterproof case. The Optio is a great choice for those who spend much time in water, but better alternatives exist for landlubbers.

✓ Waterproof, comfortable and robust

✗ Overzealous on-camera processing

SPECIFICATIONS 2,560x1,920 resolution, 3x (38-114mm) optical zoom, SD memory (12MB internal).
Part code 18382

REVIEW DIGITAL CAMERA

PANASONIC
Lumix DMC-LZ2

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £217 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.ajelectronics.co.ukDETAILS www.panasonic.co.uk

Panasonic's Lumix DMC-LZ2 has a 5-megapixel CDD, which can record images at 2,560x1,920 pixels, and a 6x optical zoom lens. This long lens helps you frame distant subjects when shooting rather than having to crop photos later. Long-zoom cameras require image stabilisation and the LZ2's two-stage system works well. It's great in low light when slow shutter speeds are needed.

The LZ2's plastic body doesn't exude style, but it is well built and feels solid enough. Photos are framed and reviewed on the reasonably bright 2" LCD display. There is no way to control the aperture or shutter speed directly, but exposure compensation, auto bracketing and white balance can be adjusted.

The LZ2 produces very crisp photos, resolving fine detail superbly and recording colour with a slight oversaturation. However, some of the photos had small noise artefacts in areas of block colour as a result of over sharpening during the camera's processing. Small prints will render these invisible, but if you plan to print enlargements you must remove them on your computer.

Aside from this noise, the LZ2 is a great camera. Its image-stabilisation system makes the camera as a whole – and its 6x zoom lens in particular – far more flexible than most of the competition.

✓ 6x zoom lens with image stabiliser

✗ Very minor noise in shots

SPECIFICATIONS 2,560x1,920 resolution, 6x (37-222mm) optical zoom, SD memory (14MB internal).
Part code DMC-LZ2EB

REVIEW DIGITAL CAMERA

SONY
CyberShot DSC-P200

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £234 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.7dayshop.comDETAILS www.sony.co.uk

Sony's DSC-P200 camera is one of the more technically accomplished on test. Behind its 3x zoom lens sits a large 7.2-megapixel sensor. This records an impressive 3,072x2,304 pixels at its maximum resolution, bettered only by the Acer in this test. Although weighty, its curved shape makes it comfortable to hold and its control buttons are well placed for easy access. The bright screen displays a wealth of shooting information.

The P200 provides a reasonable level of control. Aperture and shutter speed can be set manually, as can flash intensity, while three levels of contrast, saturation and sharpness provide limited control of on-camera processing. Focus and metering are responsive. The P200 generally produces bright, lively photos, but at its default settings they tend to be a little oversaturated. They are also a little softer than those taken with the Panasonic LZ2 and FujiFilm F10. Purple fringing is occasionally apparent in areas of extreme contrast and, as with most cameras here, dark areas are spotted with noise.

The P200 has a lot to offer in a compact body. However, it is bettered by other cameras here.

✓ 7.2-megapixel sensor allows detailed enlargements

✗ Slightly soft and oversaturated pictures

SPECIFICATIONS 3,072x2,304 resolution, 3x (38-114mm) optical zoom, MS memory (32MB supplied).
Part code DSC-P200S



MANUFACTURER	ACER	FUJIFILM	KODAK	NIKON	OLYMPUS	PANASONIC	PENTAX	SONY
Model	CR-8530	FinePix F10	EasyShare Z740	Coolpix S1	µ-mini Digital S	DMC-LZ2	Optio WP	CyberShot DSC-P200
Rating	★★★	★★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★	★★★★
Effective number of pixels	8 million	6.3 million	5 million	5.1 million	4.9 million	5 million	4.9 million	7.2 million
Maximum image resolution	3,264x2,448	2,848x2,136	2,576x1,932	2,592x1,944	2,560x1,920	2,560x1,920	2,560x1,920	3,072x2,304
Sensor size	1/2.5"	1/1.7"	1/2.5"	1/2.5"	1/2.5"	1/2.5"	1/2.5"	1/1.8"
Optical zoom	3x (36-108mm)	3x (36-108mm)	10x (38-380mm)	3x (35-105mm)	2x (35-70mm)	6x (37-222mm) with IS	3x (38mm-114mm)	3x (38-114mm)
Digital zoom	5.1x	6.2x	5x	4x	4x	4x	4x	2x
Viewfinder	Optical	No	LCD	No	No	No	No	Optical
LCD screen size	2½"	2½"	1.8"	2½"	1.8"	2"	2"	2"
LCD screen resolution	201,096 pixels	115,000 pixels	134,000 pixels	110,000 pixels	134,000 pixels	85,000 pixels	85,000 pixels	134,000 pixels
Shutter speed	½-1/5,000 seconds	15-1/2,000 seconds	8-1/7,000 seconds	2-1/350 seconds	½-1/1,000 seconds	8-1/2,000 seconds	4-1/2,000 seconds	30-1/1,000 seconds
Aperture range	2.8-6.7	2.8-5	2.8-8	3-5.4	3.5-4.9	2.8-4.5	3.3-4	2.8-5.2
Closest macro focus	5cm	8cm	12cm	4cm	8cm	5cm	1cm	6cm
ISO range	50-200	80-1,600	80-800	50-400	64-400	80-400	50-400	100-400
Maximum movie quality	640x480 at 30fps	640x480 at 30fps	640x480 at 13fps	640x480 at 15fps	320x240 at 15fps	320x240 at 30fps	320x240 at 30fps	640x480 at 16.6fps (30fps with 256MB)
File formats (still/movie)	JPEG, TIFF/AVI	JPEG/AVI, QuickTime	JPEG/QuickTime	JPEG/QuickTime	JPEG/QuickTime	JPEG/QuickTime	JPEG/QuickTime	JPEG/QuickTime
File compliance	EXIF 2.2, DCF, DPOF	EXIF 2.2, DPOF	EXIF 2.2, DCF	EXIF 2.2, DCF, DPOF	EXIF 2.2, DPOF, PRINT Image Matching III	EXIF 2.2, DCF, DPOF	EXIF 2.2, DCF, DPOF	EXIF 2.2, DPOF
Memory type (supplied)	SD (64MB)	xD (16MB)	SD (32MB internal)	SD (12MB internal)	xD (16MB)	SD (14MB internal)	SD (12MB internal)	MS (32MB)
Power	Li-ion 1,050mAh	Li-ion 1,950mAh	Ni-MH AA rechargeable	Li-ion 730mAh	Li-ion 645mAh	2x AA	Li-ion 710mAh	Li-ion 1,220mAh
Shots from full charge (quoted)	150	500	250 with rechargeable	200	Not disclosed	235 (390 with rechargeable)	180	370
FEATURES								
White balance presets	Auto, Sunlight, Cloudy, Incandescent, 2x Fluorescent, manual	Auto, Custom, Sunlight, Cloudy, Incandescent, 3x Fluorescent	Auto, Sunlight, Open Shade, Tungsten, Fluorescent	Auto, Custom, Daylight, Incandescent, Fluorescent, Cloudy, flash	Auto, Sunlight, Cloudy, Incandescent, 3x Fluorescent	Auto, Sunlight, Cloudy, Halogen, Custom, Manual	Auto, Daylight, Shade, Tungsten, Fluorescent, Manual	Auto, Sunlight, Cloudy, Flash, Fluorescent, Incandescent, Custom
Exposure compensation	-2EV to +2EV (1/3 steps)	-2EV to +2EV (1/3 steps)	-2EV to +2EV (1/3 steps)	-2EV to +2EV (1/3 steps)	-2EV to +2EV (1/3 steps)	-2EV to +2EV (1/3 steps) + Auto bracket	-2EV to +2EV (1/3 steps)	-2EV to +2EV (1/3 steps)
Focus modes	Auto, Macro, Infinity	Auto, Macro	Auto, Macro, Infinity	Auto, Macro	Auto, Macro, Super Macro	Auto, Macro	Auto, Macro, Infinity, Pan, Manual	Auto, Macro, 5-point Manual
Auto-focus modes	Multi-region, Spot	Centre, Multi, Continuous	Multi, Centre-weighted, Left, Centre, Right	Multi, Centre	ESP, Spot	5-region, 3-region, Centre, Spot	9-region, Spot	Multi, Centre, Spot
Metering	Multi-region, Spot	Multi-region, Spot, Average	Multi-pattern, Centre-weighted, Spot	Multi, Centre	ESP, Spot	Scene	Multi-segment	Multi, Centre, Spot
Histogram	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Flash modes	Auto, Red-eye Reduction, On, Off	Auto, Red-eye Reduction, On, Off, Slow Sync	Auto, On, Red-eye Reduction, Off	Auto, Off, On, Red-eye Reduction, Slow Sync	Auto, Red-eye Reduction, On, Off	Auto, Red-eye Reduction, On, Off, Slow Sync	Auto, Off, On, Red-eye Reduction, Soft	Auto, On, Off, Slow Sync, Red-eye Reduction
Priority modes	Auto, Program, Shutter, Aperture, Manual	Auto	Auto, Program, Shutter, Aperture, manual	Auto	Auto	Auto	Auto, Program	Auto, Manual
Automatic program modes	Portrait, Night Scene, Sport	Natural Light, Portrait, Landscape, Sport, Night	Portrait, Night Portrait, Landscape, Night Landscape, Sport, Self Portrait, Children, Party, Beach, Fireworks, Snow, Backlight, Close-up, Museum, Text	Portrait, Landscape, Night Portrait, Sport, Party, Beach/Snow, Sunset, Dusk, Night Landscape, Close-up, Museum, Fireworks Show, Back Light, Panorama Assist, Underwater	Auto, Landscape, Landscape and Portrait, Portrait, Indoor, Sport, Beach/Snow, Behind Glass, Self Portrait and Timer, Self Portrait, Sunset, Night Scene, Night and Portrait, Cuisine Candle	Portrait, Sport, Scenery, Night Scenery, Night Portrait, Fireworks, Party, Snow	Natural Skin tone, Night Scene, Panorama Assist, Landscape, Self Portrait, Portrait, Underwater, Surf/Snow, Sport, Candle Light	Sunset, Snow, Beach, Sport, Landscape, Portrait, Candle, Night Portrait, Night
Other photo controls	Contrast (Hard, Normal, Soft), Sharpness (Hard, Normal, Soft), Colour (Normal, Vivid, Sepia, Monochrome)	Colour (Standard, Chrome, Monochrome)	Colour (High, Normal, Low, Natural, Sepia, Monochrome), Sharpness (Hard, Normal, Soft)	Colour (Standard, Vivid, Monochrome, Sepia, Cyanotype)	Soft Focus, Fish Eye, Monochrome, Sepia, Crop, Reduce	Colour (Cool, Warm, Monochrome, Sepia, Vivid, Natural)	Resize, Crop, Digital Filter (7x Colour Filter, Monochrome, Soft), Brightness Filter, Frame, Red-eye Fix	Colour (Normal, Monochrome, Sepia), Saturation (+, Normal, -), Contrast (+, Normal, -), Sharpness (+, Normal, -)
Self timer options	10s, 2s	10s, 2s	10s, 2s	10s	15s	10s, 2s	10s, 2s	10s
Software	NTI Photo Suite	FinePix Viewer, ImageMixer	Kodak EasyShare	PictureProject	Olympus Master	SD Viewer, ArcSoft software suite	ACDSee	PicturePackage, ImageMixer
Connectivity	USB Hi-Speed, AV	USB Hi-Speed, AV	USB, AV	USB, AV	USB, AV	USB, AV	USB, AV	USB Hi-Speed, AV
Output compatibility	PictBridge, PAL, NTSC	PictBridge, PAL, NTSC	PictBridge, PAL, NTSC	PictBridge, PAL, NTSC	PictBridge, PAL, NTSC	PictBridge, PAL, NTSC	PictBridge, PAL, NTSC	PictBridge, PAL, NTSC
Weight	184g	200g	342g	134g	128g	226g	136g	182g
Dimensions (HxWxD)	57x91x27mm	58x92x27mm	78x98x72mm	58x90x20mm	55x95x28mm	64x101x33mm	51x102x22mm	52x105x28mm
Extras	Wrist strap, case, AV cable	Wrist strap, AV cable	Shoulder strap, lens adaptor, lens cap, AV cable, camera dock adaptor	Docking cradle, wrist strap, AV cable	Wrist strap, battery charger, AV cable	Wrist strap, AV cable	Wrist strap, AV cable	Wrist strap, AV cable
BUYING INFORMATION								
Warranty	One year	One year	One year	One year	Two years	One year	One year	One year
Price inc VAT	£227	£234	£222	£230	£210	£216	£200	£234
Supplier	www.dabs.com	www.7dayshop.com	www.cameras2u.com	www.cameras2u.com	www.dabs.com	www.ajelectronics.co.uk	www.cameras2u.com	www.7dayshop.com
Details	www.acer.co.uk	www.fujifilm.co.uk	www.kodak.com	www.nikon.com	www.olympus.co.uk	www.panasonic.co.uk	www.pentax.com	www.sony.com
Part code	AM.85303.001	N076590A	1843440	None	154346	DMC-LZ2EB	18382	DSC-P200S

LABS VERDICT DIGITAL CAMERAS

Every one of the cameras in this group proved capable of taking photographs that looked perfectly acceptable when printed on 6x4" photo paper. When we printed enlargements, though, the quality of some devices shone through.

If you want a small camera, you probably intend to carry it everywhere, so it's important that it can handle a few knocks – and the elements. For some level of waterproofing, the Olympus and Pentax are ideal. If you want the best picture quality and you're not worried about the weather, Nikon's CoolPix S1 is an excellent choice, though it is fiddly to use.

Panasonic's DMC-LZ2 is the best telephoto camera here, producing sharp, lively photos through an image-stabilised 6x optical zoom lens that's perfect for wildlife photography. The best of the whole bunch, though, is FujiFilm's FinePix F10. It is lightning-fast in operation and is capable of handling low light and very fast shutter speeds.

It provides a high level of flexibility and extremely reliable results. Its 2½" screen is ideal for framing and reviewing photos, and its battery lasts for a respectable 500 shots. It strongly deserves our Best Buy award. **CS**

FUJIFILM FinePix F10

